



# Arizona Registrar of Contractors

## Message from Israel G. Torres, Director

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March 2005

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### Project Cool Aid gearing up for another season of community service

In addition to working with contractors to provide construction licensing and regulatory services across our state, the ROC also looks for ways to lend a hand to Arizonans in need. In doing this, our goal is to join forces with other organizations and industry groups to participate in the continued success of programs like Project Cool Aid, which provides free home cooling system repairs to people who need them the most – seniors, disabled individuals and households with infants.



When the ROC launched Project Cool Aid with Gov. Janet Napolitano two years ago, our goal was to make Arizona's extremely hot summers more bearable for at-risk residents in need of cooling system replacement and repairs. For numerous Valley residents, Arizona's scorching desert heat poses health hazards and makes home cooling systems a necessity, not a luxury. Unfortunately, many homeowners do not have the means to secure and maintain a system that functions properly.

Project Cool Aid has been made possible by our partner, the Air Conditioning Contractors of America/Arizona (ACCA-AZ) and its generous volunteer members, and to date, Project Cool Aid has helped 107 families.

During one week in April, we will accept letters from owners of single-family homes in Maricopa County who demonstrate the need for this assistance. In past years, we have received hundreds of letters and have focused on those households that are most at risk for heat-related illnesses and who have little means to pay for these repairs or replacements. Please watch for an e-mail alert about this program in the coming weeks, visit the ROC's Web site at [www.azroc.gov](http://www.azroc.gov), or for more information, call 602-542-1525, ext. 7115.

Last year, more than 200 homeowners applied for Project Cool Aid. Repairs included everything from replacing hoses and pumps, to installing entire cooling systems. A total of 44 contractors donated more than \$72,000 for labor, supplies and equipment.

Project Cool Aid relies on the generous contributions of ACCA-AZ members who donate parts and equipment, and then spend countless hours performing repairs at a time of the year that is the busiest for them. As we forge into our third year of this community service project, we look forward once again to working with these dedicated individuals and companies. Thank you, ACCA-AZ, for your dedication and for helping to move Arizona forward!

Israel G. Torres, Director

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**Don't forget to sign up for March 30 ROC New Homeowners'**

### Investigations Update

#### Scam of the Month: Burglary committed while scam artists bid on asphalt project

Recently in Tucson, two men identifying themselves both as "Joe" approached a Tucson senior at his home and asked if he'd like to sell one of his cars. He said "no" and the two men then offered to repair his driveway. The Tucson senior said he would be interested if it was the right price. While outside examining the driveway, one of the men asked to use the restroom and entered the home unattended. Meanwhile, the other scam artist gave the elderly man a verbal estimate of \$700 to repair the driveway. The senior citizen gave him a deposit of \$200. After the men left, the homeowner discovered that two of his signed personal checks were missing. Later, he was informed by his bank that \$3,700 was stolen from his accounts.



#### Phoenix-area unlicensed contractor arrested on multiple warrants

Carey Lynn McDonald, doing business as A Town and Country Fence Company, was arrested recently on seven outstanding arrest warrants for contracting without a license. In one of his cases, criminal charges were filed after he contracted to install a fence at a Peoria residence for \$750. Not only was McDonald not legally licensed to do that work - the fence was poorly constructed and will likely need to be repaired or replaced by the homeowner. McDonald also is known to contract without a license in Phoenix, Glendale, Gilbert, Cave Creek and Buckeye, taking payment from homeowners and leaving them with bad work.

#### Protect yourself against unlicensed contracting scams!

To report possible fraudulent home improvement activities or if you have been approached door-to-door by

## Seminar

The ROC would like to remind all owners of newly constructed homes to attend the ROC's New Homeowner's Seminar on Wednesday, March 30, from 6 – 8 p.m. at the Phoenix ROC office, 800 W. Washington St. In an effort to assist new homeowners, the ROC, along with the ROC Consumer Advisory Network, has developed this first-of-its-kind seminar. The free workshop helps owners of newly constructed homes with questions about construction workmanship, the importance of using licensed contractors for new home enhancements, and how to spot home repair scams that target new residential developments.



Seminar attendees will learn about services like the Building Confidence Program, which gives homeowners and contractors the opportunity to resolve a disagreement on a workmanship issue without having to go through the formal complaint process. The seminars also cover details about completing a complaint form, job site inspections, corrective work orders, administrative hearings and the Residential Contractors' Recovery Fund.

To learn more or to register, contact the ROC at 602-542-1525, ext. 7405, or toll-free statewide outside Maricopa County at 1-888-271-9286, ext. 7405.

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## Legislative Update



The legislative session continues and is at the halfway point with more than 1,200 bills being proposed. With that in mind, the ROC continues to evaluate legislation that impacts all of its stakeholders and is directing its current efforts toward two pieces of legislation.

First, Senate Bill 1252 (SB1252) addresses two important priorities that the ROC has focused on in the past two years: unlicensed contracting and increased penalties for repeat offenders. SB 1252 helps the ROC accomplish two things.

First, it allows the ROC to publish a list of names of individuals who were found to be contracting without a license on its website. Second, this bill allows the ROC to address repeat offenders by issuing civil penalties up to \$1,000 for those individuals who continue to contract on suspended or inactive licenses. The ROC believes strongly that educating consumers and arming them with effective tools are keys to preventing them from becoming victims of unscrupulous individuals using home repair scams to access their pocketbooks.

Second, a piece of legislation introduced in the House of Representatives aims to increase the handyman exemption. If passed, House Bill 2397 (HB 2397) would increase the exemption from \$750 including labor and material, to \$1,500 only including labor. This bill excludes materials purchased by the homeowner that could be an unlimited amount. In other words, the homeowner can potentially spend an unlimited amount on materials and have an individual perform the work without any protection or recourse should something go wrong. Historically, the ROC has opposed this type of legislation because of the increased risk to consumers and the potential for abuse that impacts licensed contractors. The bill will be heard within the next two weeks in the Senate and the ROC will be working closely with legislators to inform them about the impacts of this legislation.

The session continues to move quickly and ROC staff is here to assist you in a variety of ways. If you are interested in learning more about how to get involved in the current legislative session, contact us at 602-542-1525 or toll-free statewide outside of Maricopa County at 1-888-271-9286.

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## ROC given top honor at annual SAHBA Awards

The ROC continues to partner with industry stakeholders to address contractors' needs

someone claiming to be a contractor, contact the ROC at 602-542-1525 or toll-free outside Maricopa County at 888-271-9286, or visit [www.azroc.gov](http://www.azroc.gov). Check the company's license status and report the company to the agency if you suspect a scam.

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and concerns regarding licensing and other issues that affect their businesses. Recently, the agency was honored when Director Israel Torres was named *2004 Appointed Public Official of the Year* by the Southern Arizona Home Builders Association at its annual banquet and awards.

In presenting this award to Director Torres, SAHBA credited the ROC for moving the agency in a positive direction in 2004 for both Arizona citizens and builders. For example, SAHBA partnered with the ROC to help with issues such as unlicensed contractors and minimum workmanship standards.

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## **Construction in Indian Country conference brings Tribal leaders, construction industry together**

Join Tribal members and construction industry representatives at the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Construction in Indian Country National Conference on May 5-6, 2005 , presented by the Del E. Webb School of Construction and the Office of Indian Affairs at Arizona State University .

The goal of this innovative gathering is to assist in securing and managing construction among American Indian sovereignties. To accomplish this, the conference aims to educate designers, contractors, subcontractors, and suppliers about the realities and opportunities concerning construction in Indian Country. Organizers hope that the conference will help create beneficial relationships while building trust among each other. Conference sessions will include discussions and presentations about topics such as contractor-tribal relations, construction management, construction law and project needs in Indian Country.

This year's conference will be held at the Phoenix Sheraton Crescent Hotel. To register or for additional information, visit <http://construction.asu.edu/busdev/cic/cic.htm>, or contact Mary Lue Peck by email at [marylue.peck@asu.edu](mailto:marylue.peck@asu.edu) or by telephone at 480-965-0107.

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## **Helping Hands for Seniors provides independent living assistance and home repairs to seniors in need**

Last month, the ROC, the ROC Labor Advisory Council (LAC), AARP Arizona and the ROC Consumer Advisory Network held the Phoenix Helping Hands for Seniors (HHSP) Community Day in Phoenix. The program was created after HHSP partners saw a need to assist seniors with accident-preventing modifications to their homes. The repairs are free to low-income seniors who live in Metro Phoenix and Tucson. Recipients submitted statements of need to the program last November and were selected by the HHSP representatives based on their needs and special circumstances. HHSP partners are supplying all parts and labor for the repairs at no charge to the recipients.



HHSP volunteers replaced the Samozas' entire bathroom, upgraded parts of the homes' electrical system, replaced the roof and laid a ceramic tile floor in the kitchen



ROC Director Israel Torres visits with HHSP client Maria Samoza



HHSP volunteers braved the February rains to complete numerous home safety repairs for Phoenix couple Maria and Pablo Samoja

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